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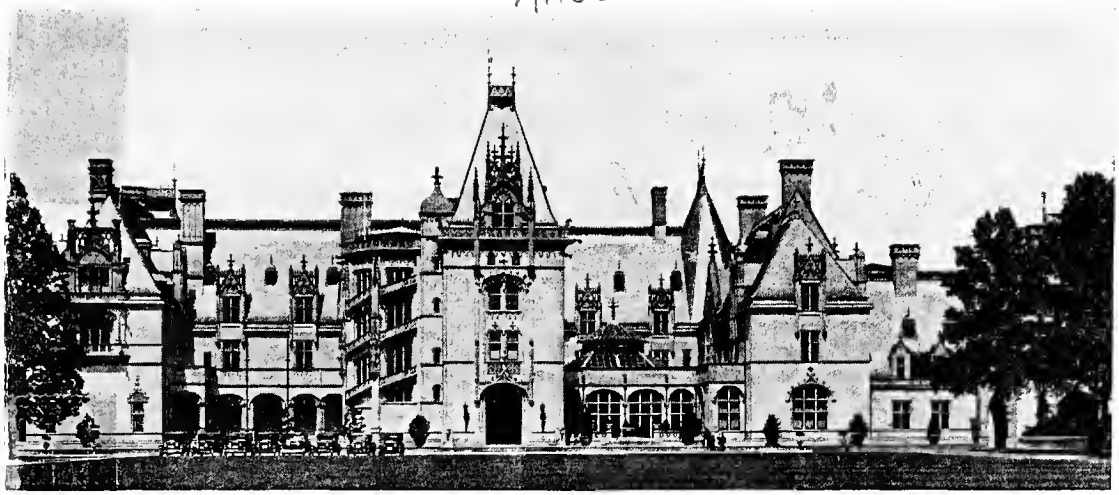


BILTMORE HOUSE was built by the late George W. Vanderbilt, the site, near Asheville, in the mountains of western North Carolina, having been selected by him after years of travel in search of an ideal location for a country home. For 35 years, the house was closed except to the family and guests, but through the efforts of the Asheville Chamber of Commerce, its present owner, Mrs. John F. A. Cecil, only daughter of Mr. Vanderbilt, has consented to open the house to the public.

Construction of Biltmore House was begun in 1890, under the plans of Richard Hunt, of New York, who, with Mr. Vanderbilt, selected a design strongly influenced by the chateaus of the French Renaissance. Five years were required for its completion. The foundations of the house cover five acres. Frederick Law Olmsted, designer of Central Park in New York City, planned the grounds and gardens of the Estate. Mr. Vanderbilt personally selected, from many parts of the world, furniture, furnishings, objects of art and decorations for the interior of the house, and the collection includes many rare and beautiful examples of period furniture and tapestries, paintings, bronzes and engravings.

Biltmore House is in the center of an estate of more than 12,000 acres, which once included more than 100,000 acres, a large part of which was turned over to the Government and formed a nucleus for the Pisgah National Forest. Visitors are admitted to the Estate through the Biltmore Lodge Gate. Entrance to the house is by way of the huge main

door of the mansion. At the left of the main entrance is the "Grand Staircase," modeled after the staircase in the Chateau of Blois. It is a broad, easy stone spiral that extends to the topmost floor of the house without supports other than its own arch construction. From the entrance hall, visitors are directed to the "Palm Court," a sunken marble circular area, filled with growing palms and flowers, the central feature of which is the fountain figure, Boy and Swan, by Karl Bitter. From the Palm Court, visitors proceed into the Oak Drawing Room, the paneled walls of which are covered with engravings by notable artists, most of them after paintings by Landseer. Over the fireplace are three bronzes by Barye. The Banquet Hall is a room of Norman design, 72 feet long and 75 feet high. On the walls of this room hang the five Gobelin Tapestries, which belonged to Francis I of France, and adorned his tent at his historic meeting with Henry VIII of England at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, in the year 1515. The carving over the fireplace is the "Return from the Chase" by Karl Bitter; the wood carving on the Organ Gallery represents scenes from Wagner's Operas, and is also by Bitter. The Dining Room is notable for its Spanish leather covered walls above a red marble panel, the Wedgewood fireplace, and its collection of carved ivory figures, family portraits and furniture upholstered in Genoese velvet.

Visitors come next to the Print Room, on the walls of which hang scores of rare engravings, representative of the works of McArdell, Earlom, C. Turner, Cousins, Ward and Gole, after Reynolds, Lawrence, Hoppner, Gainsborough, Van Dyck, Rubens and Rembrandt, and of particular interest is the ancient engraving representing the family pedigree of Maximilian the Great, by Max Durer (1515). In this room is to be found the chessmen and table that once belonged to Napoleon Bonaparte, and which he took with him to St. Helena, and several pieces of rare and beautiful period furniture. From the windows of this room is to be had one of the most exquisite views available anywhere on the Estate, with the Pisgah Range in the background and the French Broad River in the middle distance, winding its way into the mountains.

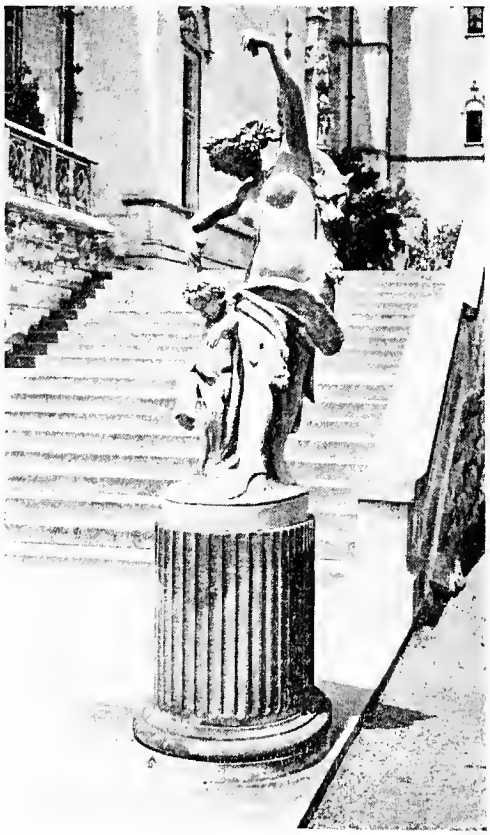
The Tapestry Gallery, which is 90 feet long and 30 feet wide, contains the three 15th Century Flemish Tapestries, "Prudence," "Faith" and "Charity." In addition to the various beautiful specimens of period furniture, the room contains the set of twelve figures in Meissen china, representing the Twelve Apostles, and bear the Austrian Imperial Arms. The portraits in this room are of Mr. George Vanderbilt and his mother,

Mrs. Wm H. Vanderbilt, by Sargent, and of Mrs. Peter G. Gerry (formerly Mrs. George Vanderbilt), by Boldini. Beyond the Tapestry Gallery is the Library, which contains more than 20,000 beautifully bound volumes, mostly works on Art, Landscape Gardening and Architecture, which were of especial interest to Mr. Vanderbilt. The ceiling of the Library is a remarkable canvas by Tiepolo, procured by Mr. Vanderbilt from an Italian castle, the identity of which has never been disclosed.

On the second floor of the house visitors are admitted to the First Hall, which is remarkable for the portraits of Hunt and Olmsted by Sargent, painted at Biltmore, and a large 16th Century Isphahan Palace rug, 33′x 25′. Opening off the First Hall is the exquisite Louis XVI Room, which contains fine specimens of furniture of that period. The South Bedroom, which was Mr. Vanderbilt's, with its massive carved furniture and furnishings of Spanish, Italian and Portuguese period design; the Oak Sitting Room, particularly distinguished for Sargent's portraits of Mrs. Kissam and Mrs. Edward Bacon and the collection of bronzes by Barye and Mene, and the adjoining Bedroom in Genoese velvet, are open to visitors.

There are three principal Gardens of Biltmore House—the Italian Garden, the Walled Garden and the Spring Garden, all of which contain rare and beautiful plants and flowers.

Biltmore Estate has seventeen miles of macadam roads and 120 miles of riding trails and dirt roads. More than 750 persons are employed on the estate. A large number of these work in the Biltmore Dairies and Farms. The dairy herd includes about 700 milk cows, virtually all pure bred Jerseys. The Biltmore Herd has long been recognized as one of the finest in the country.



The Dancing Lesson.

THE GRAND STAIRWAY

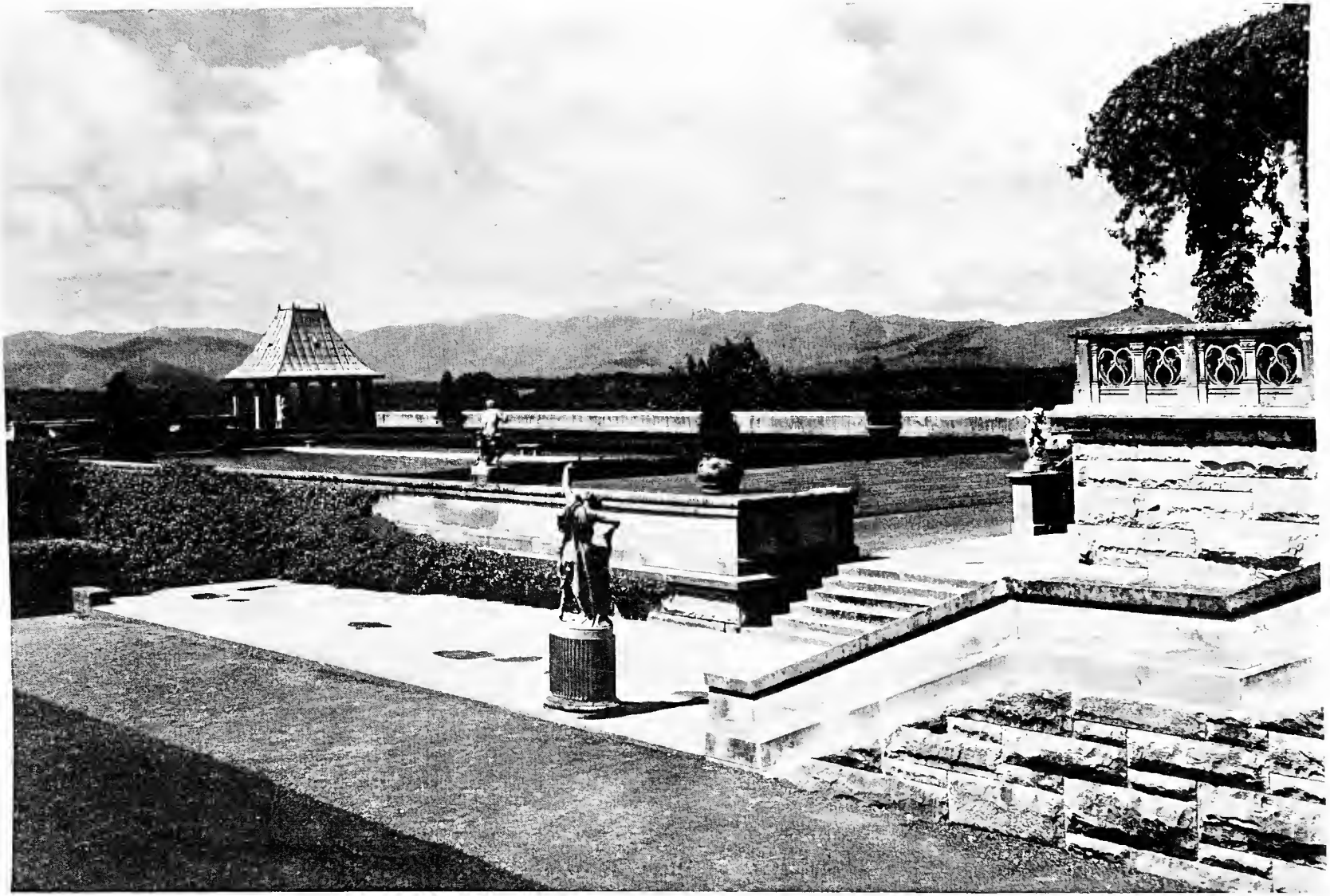
BILTMORE HOUSE FROM THE ITALIAN GARDEN

NAPOLEON'S CHESSMEN AND TABLE

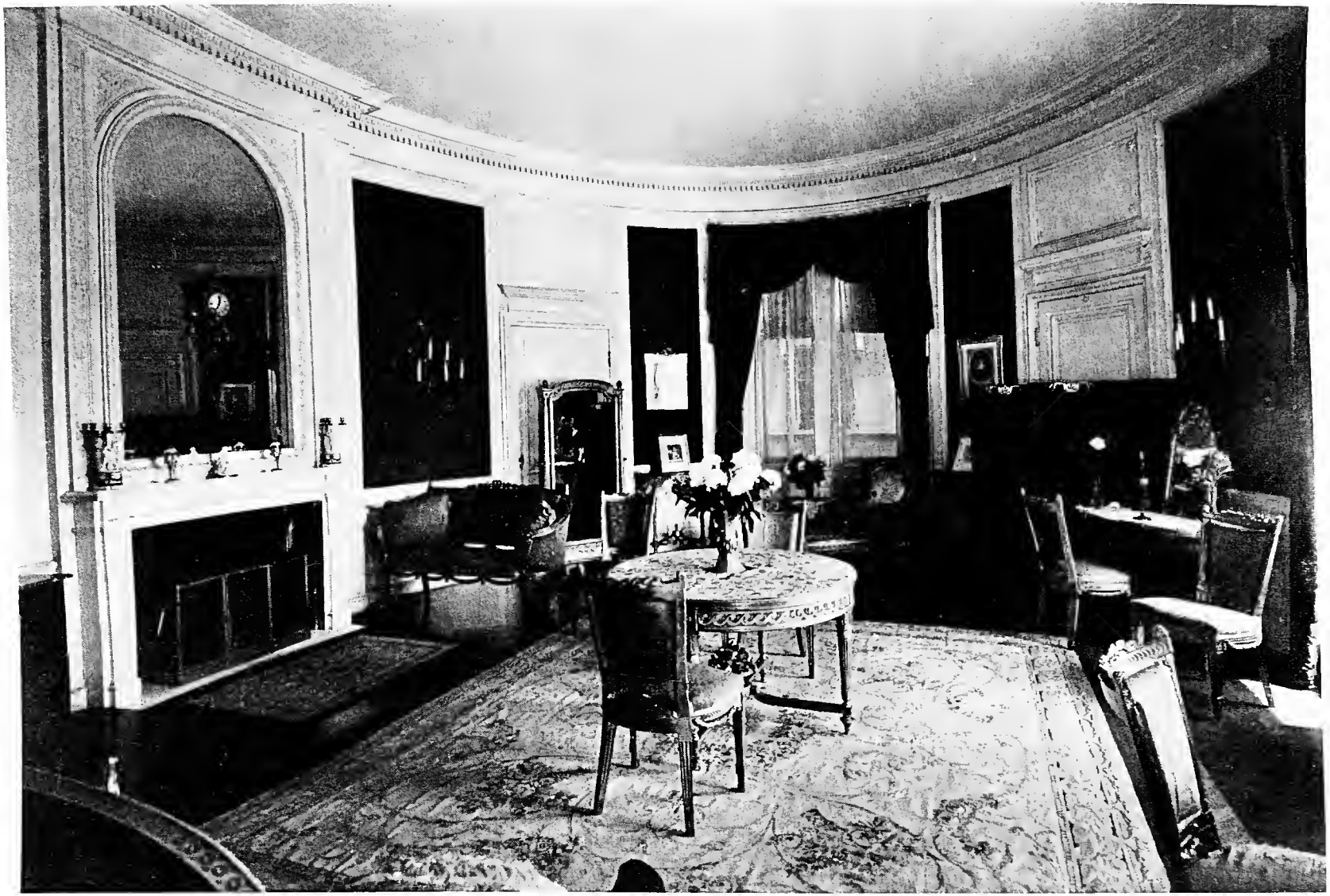
PISGAH AND THE RAT FROM WEST LOGGIA

BILTMORE HOUSE ACROSS THE LAGOON

BILTMORE HOUSE FROM THE RAMP



PISGAH RANGE ACROSS THE SOUTH TERRACE



LOUIS XVI ROOM

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